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Indonesia, Aceh and the Modern Nation-State

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Models of Nationalism and the Nation-State

Much of the recent literature on the rise of ethno-nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe points to certain socio-economic factors—industrialisation, urbanisation, mobility within certain borders, mass education, print capitalism—which transformed Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[1] The same factors have been transforming Southeast Asia almost a century later, as its population shifts from a predominantly rural and agrarian to a largely urban, industrial and educated one. As the lid of authoritarian regimes such as Suharto's Indonesia is lifted and populist politics flourish, should we expect new forms of ethno-nationalism to begin redrawing the boundaries of Southeast Asia? Do we gain more insight into the likely path of a country like Indonesia by contemplating France in the late nineteenth century, when a post-revolutionary centralising state turned "peasants into Frenchmen" through education and mass communications,[2] or the Hapsburg and Turkish empires of the same period, increasingly rent by populist nationalist movements, each demanding a separate nation-state?

If the latter were the model, the twenty-first century might see a repeat in Asia of the ghastly history of twentieth-century Central Europe, in which a new order of ethnically homogeneous nation-states struggled into being at a terrible cost in warfare and the persecution of minorities. The fate of Marxist, post-revolutionary regimes in Moscow and Belgrade, which for a half-century or more prolonged imperial boundaries at the expense of ethno-nationalist claims, could suggest similar outcomes for post-revolutionary Indonesia and Burma, or eventually China.

Twentieth-century Asian nationalisms were on the whole designed to bring about European-style nation-states, because these had proved "the sure and attested way of attaining power and wealth", as William McNeill has put it.[3] But ethnic homogeneity was not part of the original agenda of most of these Asian nationalisms,[4] and even democracy was relatively low on that agenda in comparison to anti-colonialism, modernisation, Western-style education and Marxist economics. Now that democracy and mass politics are central parts of the agenda, will ethnic homogeneity prove a necessary accompaniment? Must Asians undergo similar traumas before emerging with the kind of nation-states that western Europeans had by 1945? If so, they are in for a very rough century, and Indonesia (along with countries such as Burma, India and Pakistan) will be as doomed as the Austro-Hungarian empire. This

possibility seemed very real to Indonesians and others as they contemplated the upheavals in the Balkans and experienced their own painful democratisation in the 1990s. Many Indonesianists began to think about this previously unthinkable future for Indonesia.

On the other hand, international conditions have changed greatly in the past century, and chiefly in the direction of a post-nationalist globalised order. In this new world, might national sovereignty have so little meaning that people will no longer die for it? Rather, from Palestine to Chechnya and Ayodhya, is twenty-first century political violence motivated rather by newly imagined global communities and in reaction to globally demonised enemies?

Southeast Asia is an important place to ponder these questions, because like Europe it represents one of the crumpled extremities of the Eurasian land-mass where empires failed to unify and pluralisms remain intense. So far, the borders of its states, however, are those created by foreign imperialisms, and not by the kind of mass politics, ethnic competition and warfare which created the nation-states of Europe. Nor do Southeast Asian borders have any of the antiquity of those between China and its former tributaries in Korea and Vietnam, where more than a thousand years of bureaucratic government have built the most stable (though far from peaceful) borders in the world. The rest of pre-colonial Southeast Asia is a world where we can speak historically of cultural cores, or mandalas of influence, but not of borders. Let me now turn to the particular case of Indonesia.

Indonesia and the Nation-State

I have argued elsewhere that the political genius of the archipelago in the long term has been the way complex cultural communities were formed and sustained by something other than central military/bureaucratic power—be it kinship networks, market cycles, charismatic kings, sacred sites or the "theatre" of ritual. The intense pluralities and mutualities of such systems may have allowed for much low-level violence and contestation, or in places even required it. Yet, the attractions of flexibility and freedom in such a system seemed to outweigh the disadvantages of instability. It was not because Indonesians were unaware of bureaucratic states that they persevered with their looser systems, since they had interacted with the mother of all bureaucracies, China, since at least the thirteenth century. In the sixteenth century, Chinese chroniclers still spoke of these southern barbarians (man and yi) as inherently antithetic to states—"Like the birds and beasts, without human morality."[5] Malay texts of the same period seem to acknowledge the power of Chinese bureaucracy but to rejoice in the proverbial agility of weak-state southerners in outmanoeuvring the great behemoth through sheer trickery.[6]

For at least the past decade, one of the thrusts of new history-writing about pre-colonial Indonesia has been to explore the fascinating absence of states in our modern sense of military and police power, law and bureaucracy. If I may quote myself:

> In Indonesia the state has always been essentially coastal and sustained by foreign resources, while the highlands have been miracles of statelessness, tenuously held

> together by kinship systems and ritual obligations rather than bureaucracy…. So persistently has each step towards stronger states in the archipelago arisen from trading ports, with external aid and inspiration, that one is inclined to seek the indigenous political dynamic in a genius for managing without states.[7]

David Henley took me to task in a recent publication, for implying that this semi-statelessness was a preferred condition, whereas his evidence, especially from northern Sulawesi before 1900, appeared to show an eagerness to escape from the uncertainties of statelessness once a Dutch presence provided an alternative.[8] He may be onto something here. There were certainly Indonesian societies which behaved this way, even including the Balinese, who fought dramatically to the point of ritual suicide against the new Dutch order, and yet appeared to accept peacefully the notion of a Dutch referee for their conflicts once the war was lost. The low state or magical state phenomena we keep finding in Indonesia may be imposed as much by environmental factors as by cultural preference. Port rulers who could generate bureaucratic power from the wealth of maritime trade, of whom the Dutch were the most important, were often seen as a necessary evil or perhaps even a good. I will return to this issue in the case of the successor Indonesian state.

The kind of description of pre-colonial society which set historians off in this direction is well reflected by Stamford Raffles' description of the Sumatran societies he encountered from his base in Bencoolen:

> Sumatra is, in a great measure, peopled by innumerable petty tribes, subject to no general government…. At present the people are as wandering in their habits as the birds of the air, and until they are congregated and organised under something like authority, nothing can be done with them.[9]

Lest this seem an extreme "stateless" example, one might explore the internal workings of polities generally taken by the outside world to be hierarchic monarchies, such as those of the Bugis in South Sulawesi. In fact these were wonderfully complex contractual alliances between lineages, where at the enthroning of each new king (in Wajo) the constituting lineage chiefs would ritually declare, "I will conduct my own affairs, I will preserve my manners, I will maintain my custom, only if I need it will I appeal to your advice."[10]

Older writers sometimes consigned to a little-understood Weberian "charisma" this curiously different Southeast Asian understanding of how power worked. Indonesianists of my generation have been particularly indebted, however, to their two most influential gurus—Benedict Anderson and Clifford Geertz—who began to look at the phenomenon more carefully in the 1970s and 1980s, initially cooperatively.[11] Anderson's influential 1972 essay famously contrasted a Javanese idea of power, "that intangible, mysterious and divine energy which animates the universe", to a more abstract understanding in the modern West.[12]

Subsequently, Geertz published Negara in 1980, perhaps his most influential book among historians at large, though irritating to Bali-scholars. On the largely historical evidence of

nineteenth-century Bali (supplemented of course by his fieldwork in the 1960s) he developed the paradigm of the "theatre state",

> In which the kings and princes were the impresarios, the priests the directors, and the peasants the supporting cast, stage crew and audience…. Court ceremonialism was the driving force of the court politics; and mass ritual was not a device to shore up the state, but rather the state, even in its final gasp, was a device for the enactment of mass ritual. Power served pomp, not pomp power.[13]

As happens all too often, the historians then began to elaborate the trail blazed by a political scientist and an anthropologist. If Geertz had found the key to what pre-colonial Indonesian politics were about in theatrical state ritual, Wolters found it in the way Southeast Asian "men of prowess" appropriated Hindu concepts of the sacred.[14] Anthony Milner found in Malay texts evidence that the purchase of "ceremonial rulers" around the Straits of Malacca was modest but real.[15] Writing in the 1990s, Jane Drakard (for Minangkabau) explained kingly power in terms of the charismatic power of the written word; Luc Nagtegal (for Java) and Henk Schulte Nordholt (for Bali) in terms of unstable competing networks of kinship and ritual; Merle Ricklefs (for Java) and Margaret Wiener (for Bali) in magical ritual means of weaving, or at least asserting, coherence and unity. Finally, Leonard Andaya argued for Maluku that its political system required carefully balanced dualities and quadripartite division, which warred with each other even while recognising each other's indispensability to the system.[16]

While all these writers used the abundant Dutch evidence of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries to document Indonesian political styles, others were in a parallel way demolishing the myth that the ancient states of which less was known had been powerful "empires" before the modern period of decline. Indonesian nationalism had, of course, been particularly excited by the European discovery in the period 1890–1920 of the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit (which flourished in the fourteenth century) and the Sumatran one of Sriwijaya (more amorphously potent from seventh to twelfth centuries). But Jan Christie has systematically shown how decentred Majapahit and all other Javanese "kingdoms" were. "Political ties and tax rights in Java tended, over time, to devolve into somewhat unstable and territorially unfocussed chains of patron-client ties, as tax-collecting authority, like everything else, tended to subdivide rather than accumulate."[17] Wolters, Manguin and others similarly laboured to make sense of the relative absence of temple remains at what was believed to be the heart of Sriwijaya, preferring a loose model of shifting trade centres and sacred or magical sites.[18]

Riding as I have on these many attempts to grapple with the elusive "otherness" of statehood in Southeast Asia, Tony Day has produced the first attempt to synthesise and interpret the new work on a Southeast Asian scale—though the scheme works best for Indonesia (and not at all for Singapore and Vietnam). His Fluid Iron helpfully rejects any traditional/modern or indigenous/external dichotomies of state. Rather, he categorises the different theories about how power was managed and society made to cohere in terms of four themes, all of which survive in contemporary Indonesia. The first is kinship,

encompassing both familiar kinship ties and the gendered and hierarchic imagery of family, love and paternalism. The second is the role of knowledge, particularly outside knowledge, in cosmological sources of power, which he insists, "continue to exist until this very day, even in Marxist writings".[19] Bureaucracy qualifies as Day's third category, even though he takes the rather strong position that "Even in its most authoritarian and totalitarian forms, the Southeast Asian state is closer to anarchy than to statehood in a Weberian sense."[20] Yet "bureaucratic polity" arguments remain prominent in the literature of colonial and post-colonial polities. What is it, Day asks, "that looks like a bureaucracy, in early as well as contemporary times, but is not one, according to a Weberian definition".[21] The missing glue the first three categories fail to provide is to be found in Day's fourth category, state violence and terror, still "the primary 'sanctioning capacity' of the modern Southeast Asian nation-state".[22]

The debate continues. While appreciating Day's emphasis on hybridities and subtle interactions over time between his four themes, I continue to see foreign-ness as essential to the purchase enjoyed by both his second and third categories.[23] In pre-colonial, inland and upland Indonesia, processes of fragmentation and balance prevented economic power from accumulating, while maintaining socio-cultural interactions of various kinds that maintained the high culture. More bureaucratically or militarily powerful states always drew their wealth, power and legitimation from the outside through trade, like the Muslim gunpowder empires of Aceh, Makasar and Banten. By far the greatest such concentration of power was the Dutch East India Company (VOC), which in many areas made such a mark that its successor, the Dutch colonial state of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, continued to be known as the kumpeni. Before 1900 the great majority of Indonesians experienced the modern bureaucratic state as an external and alien phenomenon to be negotiated around, even if it was sometimes useful.

The modern sense of state, as an entity monopolising the legal use of force within fixed boundaries, came unusually late to the Indonesian archipelago. It came, moreover, at Dutch hands. Only in the few years before and after 1900 did the Dutch abandon the elaborate process of signing hundreds of diverse treaties with local rulers through whom they would attempt to rule, in favour of short, sharp declarations (korte verklaring) that:

> territory X forms a part of Netherlands India and thereby stands under the sovereignty of the Netherlands…. And I will follow all commands that are or shall be given to me by or on behalf of the Governor-General or His representative.[24]

From the point when Van Heutsz, Idenburg and Colijn imposed this declaration throughout the archipelago in the first decade of the twentieth century, all Indonesians encountered some elements of the modern nation-state—a monopoly of force, single currency and unified market, uniform bureaucratic and military structures and the beginning of a unitary education system. But of course other key elements of the nation state were not encouraged by the colonial system, including mass education, political mobilisation and the welding of common consciousness through symbolic representation. Given the extent of indirect rule through myriad rajas and sultans, the Netherlands Indies in several respects never reached

even the degree of common consciousness of the absolutist states of seventeenth-century Europe, or perhaps China of the Ming and Qing dynasties. This imagining of community was of course the task of nationalism. Under the Japanese occupation and during the revolution, in the hands of Sukarno, nationalism did achieve an astonishing if unstable invention of national consciousness. Finally, under Suharto's 33-year regime it did really appear to many observers that this consciousness was creating stable roots through sustained manipulation of education, indoctrination classes (P4) and the controlled media.[25]

Nevertheless the Indonesian state remained a successor of the alien and imposed colonial one, and constantly resorted to force and censorship to impose itself. Some, including Anderson in the 1980s, tended to see it as an artificial and necessarily authoritarian successor of Netherlands India, with little indigenous life in it.[26] I too had been questioning, before Suharto's fall and Timor's independence, whether true mass nationalism was in the past or the future of states like Indonesia.[27] I thought we should be looking carefully at potential ethno-nationalisms in Indonesia and elsewhere to see whether any of these were likely to tear the fabric of the post-colonial plural autocracies under new conditions of popular democracy. However, the lectures I gave in 1996 and 1997, largely based on fieldwork in northern Sumatra in 1995, took the view that conditions were unfavourable for the breakup of Indonesia into populist ethno-nationalist states. The reasons were essentially twofold:

- Internally, Indonesia was urbanising into inherently plural, "Indonesian" cities, leaving very few large cities which could serve as hothouses for ethnonationalism (as Budapest, Prague or Zagreb did in the Austrian empire). I was astonished, for example, at the high proportions (over 90 per cent) of my student sample in Medan who said that they spoke Indonesian not only to each other but to their parents. At the same time, my surveys showed exceptionally high rates of education and outmigration from three rural Batak villages. Although I spent only a few days in Aceh during that fieldwork, this experience did not dissuade me from the conclusion that nineteenth-century France was a better parallel for contemporary Indonesia than Austro-Hungary.

- Externally, the world is now so integrated economically and in communications that much of the point of independence struggles is removed, and the international community has become less tolerant of them, while the need for internal cultural homogeneity is lessened.

Since Suharto's fall in May 1998, the pressures of democratisation at a time of drastic economic downturn have of course been extremely destabilising, and pressure to break up Indonesia into smaller and possibly more homogeneous units grew much faster than anyone could have imagined. After the radical shift in opinion in Aceh during 1999, I paid two more brief visits there (January 2000 and January 2003), which required severe rethinking of these earlier conclusions. But for most of Indonesia I want to modify rather than abandon them. Indigenous society's very resistance to rational/bureaucratic states in the past has made the externally-imposed colonial/Indonesian state more necessary today. The long-term pattern is still for the Indonesian state and mass media to turn the archipelago's peoples into Indonesians, similar enough in their educated and popular use of the Indonesian language to

create a moral community. Democratisation, however, entails an overdue lowering of expectations about how the myths and emotions of Indonesian unity are translated as political uniformity and loyalty. Increasingly in a globalised world, "Indonesia" becomes the frame or window through which global forces are embraced, rather than the wall to keep it out.

In short, most Indonesians outside Java experienced "state" in its modern sense only in the form of an alien imposition, the kumpeni, through the last century. This was liberating for some, oppressive for others. Within a generation of its imposition, however, this concept of state became firmly associated with modernity, progress and power. Nationalism sought to invent an "Indonesian" face for it. Within a single decade of the 1940s, the magic was effected of making this appear the only valid concept of state, endowed with a great deal of passion and rhetoric. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, it proved impossible to maintain this novel and once-alien concept except with increasing levels of force. Nevertheless, the archipelago has maintained, better than most contemporary places, viable non-state systems of cultural coherence. It seems likely both that many of them will remain, and that the only modern state positioned above them as a mediator of international forces will continue to be something like the Indonesian state, the descendant of the kumpeni.

Aceh's Anomalous Position

What then is the particular problem of Aceh and Papua? Historically, the reasons are as opposite as their locations in the archipelago. In terms of my theme, the central anomaly of Aceh is the way it was defined by a state; while the central anomaly of Papua is that it experienced neither a state, until the very late (1920s) Dutch conquest, nor a common culture of the type that united stateless societies like the Batak and Minangkabau. While this difference makes Acehnese more likely than Papuans to relate effectively to their own state, there are of course international factors which lean much more in Papua's direction. Let me focus henceforth on Aceh.

I mentioned above that the more bureaucratically powerful states were always sustained and legitimated by outside forces, such as trade, technology and religion. At least three of Indonesia's modern ethnicities, Aceh, Makasar and Banten, were in fact created by gunpowder empires of the same name in the "age of commerce". The Makasar and Banten states, however, were conquered and demoralised by the Dutch in 1669 and 1684, respectively. In Banten's case, a client sultan survived into the nineteenth century, and enough memory of state remained to motivate the successful 1998 movement for a separate Banten Province. The misfortune of the Makasarese in these terms was that their capital became the centre of Dutch and later Indonesian power in Sulawesi, and hence other ethnicities came to dominate it. Aceh is virtually alone as an identity explicitly formed by a state over four centuries, the memory of which was still vigorous in the twentieth. For Acehnese, it was the Dutch/Indonesian state that appeared the more artificial, with only a century of heavily contested occupancy of the territory.

Besides this central relation to the state, there are some other historically distinctive features of Aceh, which may be summarised as follows.

1. Firstly, until the Dutch conquest in the late nineteenth century, Aceh's diplomatic and economic linkages were to the Indian Ocean and the Malayan Peninsula, not to the Java Sea world dominated by first Java and then the Dutch. It was part of the Indian Ocean Islamic œcumene ever since Pasai was visited and described by Ibn Battuta in the fourteenth century. Aceh's "tribute" to Ottoman Turkey in the period 1538–68[28] was as natural in this connection as was that of Java to Ming China in the fifteenth century.

2. Secondly, Aceh's pepper production, first in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and again in the period 1800–70, when the sultanate provided half the world's supply, gave it strong trade links to Turkey, India, England, the United States, France and Italy, all of which were appealed to diplomatically at some time. From about 1850 trade was reorganised through entrepôts on the regular steamer route, so that Penang became for Aceh "the gateway to the world; yes, the world itself", according to Snouck Hurgronje in 1893. "Exclusively on the experience of Acehnese in Penang rests the general conviction in Aceh that the rule of the English would be infinitely preferable to ours."[29]

3. The sultanate was particularly active internationally in the period 1868–74, as Dutch determination to round out its claims to Sumatra became increasingly clear. Britain had signed a treaty of protection and alliance with Aceh in 1819 (through Stamford Raffles), and in handing over its rights to Sumatra to the Dutch in 1824 had consequently required that Aceh's independence be respected. This guarantee was waived by Britain in 1871 in return for Dutch concessions in West Africa, and the Dutch immediately thereafter began to bully Aceh into recognition of Dutch sovereignty. In consequence, Aceh renewed an active policy of seeking alliances with Turkey, France, Britain, Italy and the United States. It was Acehnese contacts with the US consul, in particular, that gave the Dutch war party the opportunity to propel Holland into a war for which it was astonishingly ill-prepared.

4. Acehnese pride in this distinct past took shape in the extremely bitter resistance to the Dutch of 1873–1914, the last part of which was focused in the Gayo area, ethnically distinct but sufficiently associated with the sultanate to resist heroically in its name. In total about 100,000 people died through war and attendant disruption on the Acehnese side, as against about 16,000 on the Dutch side.[30] Even at the most peaceful moment of the Dutch occupation, the 1930s, the Dutch governor could warn that every Acehnese nourished "a fanatical love of freedom, reinforced by a powerful sense of race, with a consequent contempt for foreigners and hatred for the infidel intruder", so that a constant display of superior force was the only thing which kept Dutch rule intact there.[31] One should never underestimate the readiness of Acehnese to sacrifice for this national pride.

5. Rebellions have been a constant theme, in every decade of the twentieth century. The periodic anti-Dutch rebellions of the 1920s and 1930s culminated in early 1942, as a

Japanese invasion became imminent. An uprising forced the Dutch to abandon Aceh before any Japanese had landed—the only place where this happened. And although the insurgent Acehnese then welcomed the Japanese, by 1944 there was another rebellion, among the bloodiest in wartime Indonesia, against the Japanese military. The rebellions against Jakarta's control under Teungku Daud Beureu'eh (who had been the most influential ulama and revolutionary leader of 1945–50) in 1953–62, and the then little-known Hasan Tiro since 1976, left relatively short periods of the twentieth century during which Aceh was not disturbed by rebellion against Jakarta.

6. The specific idea of an Acehnese state was never far from the minds of those opposing the Jakarta status quo in Aceh. Until his submission to the Dutch in 1903, the "pretender sultan", Tuanku Muhammad Daud, had been at the heart of resistance for forty years. In 1938–40 the groups most dissatisfied with the power of the ulèëbalang aristocracy in Aceh, notably including many reformist ulama, rallied behind the idea of a restored sultanate.[32] During the anti-Dutch revolution of 1945–49 these same groups shifted to supporting the Indonesian Republic and seized the opportunity to eliminate their ulèëbalang rivals, a few of whom were pro-Dutch. Aceh was a model of resistance to all ideas emanating from the Dutch in this contested period, including federalism, though in practice Acehnese had no need of federal safeguards since they were fully in control of Aceh. Daud Beureu'eh's 1953 rebellion was overtly to support not an independent Aceh, but an Indonesian Islamic state (NII) for which he believed Aceh had fought in the revolution. Nevertheless, two years later, a separate Negara Bahagian Aceh (Aceh federal state) was established by the rebels through the Batee Kureng Declaration of 23 September 1955, under a powerful Wali Negara or head of state (Daud Beureu'eh himself), a prime minister and a cabinet.[33]

The different way in which Acehnese have experienced being part of a state in the past does not in itself mean they cannot live within the bounds of an Indonesian state. Aceh has had two important elites in the past century, the Islamic-educated and the state-educated. In 1945 enough of both elites, including the young Hasan Tiro himself, enthusiastically supported the Indonesian Republic to carry the day against some of the Dutch-educated ulèëbalang who wanted to defend the established order. The new history developed by Hasan Tiro in the 1970s and becoming popular after 1998, is wide of the mark in claiming that, after the Japanese surrender, Aceh "was turned over by the Dutch to the Javanese—their mercenaries—by hasty fiat of colonial powers", and that Acehnese had no part in this transition.[34] It may be true that the rural majority of Aceh's population had not been effectively socialised as Indonesians by the 1940s, but Tiro's generation of educated youth threw themselves enthusiastically onto the Indonesian side, taking their mentors like Daud Beureu'eh with them.

Indeed, Aceh has a particularly central historical relationship to two factors—Islam and the Malay/Indonesian language—which help to make Indonesia coherent. A Malay-language, Southeast Asian variant of Islam was first developed in Pasai (near modern Lhokseumawe) in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and was given literary substance in Aceh in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through such writers as Hamzah Fansuri, Nuruddin ar-

Raniry, and Abdurra'uf of Singkel or Syiah Kuala (the last two being celebrated in the names of Aceh's two universities).

Acehnese appear to have written in Malay as far back as they were able to write, and all the early Acehnese texts are in that language or Arabic. Only in the late seventeenth century does there begin to be evidence of writing in Acehnese, which remained for the most part a language of speech and recitation. The Aceh linguist Mark Durie has described the Acehnese texts which were written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as being "framed" in a context of Malay and Arabic, whereby the beginning and end of texts were in Malay, with an Arabic exordium.[35] Durie believes there has never been "an established tradition of instruction in reading and writing Acehnese"—those who could recite Acehnese texts to an audience had already learned to read through Malay and Arabic.[36] Despite the considerable effort since 1999 to publish Acehnese dictionaries and writings and to press for its use in schools, Acehnese are wedded to Malay/Indonesian in a fundamental way.

On the other hand, Hasan Tiro exposed a vulnerable nerve when he attacked the viability of the Indonesian state concept.

> Indonesia' is merely a new label, in a totally foreign nomenclature … to replace the despicable 'Dutch East Indies' in an attempt to unite the administration of their ill-gotten far-flung colonies…. If Dutch colonialism was wrong, then Javanese colonialism which was squarely based on it cannot be right.[37]

The emotional and moral capital invested in the Republik Indonesia concept in the period 1945–98 created expectations of conformity that the colonial state had never imagined and the independent one could only appear to deliver through violence and often terror.

A more matter-of-fact acceptance of the state as a necessary and convenient window to the modern world can live more comfortably with diversity, anomalies and even rivals. The Indonesian government's acceptance of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding of 15 August 2005 was a remarkable step towards pragmatism on this front. The agreement itself departed radically from the centralised unitary state so dear to both Sukarno and Suharto, by allowing for the position of Wali Nanggroe (a head of state by another name), "regional symbols including a flag, a crest and a hymn", and full self-government in all areas not reserved to Jakarta, i.e. "foreign affairs, external defence, national security, monetary and fiscal matters, justice and freedom of religion".[38] In principle this was a completely new departure towards pragmatically asymmetric government, in which one constituent of the Republic has considerably more legal autonomy than others. Such arrangements are familiar in federal Malaysia and Canada, and long accepted in the United Kingdom, but go against the grain in post-revolutionary centralised republics such as Indonesia.[39] Nationalists within the Indonesian parliament and military, as well as conservatives within its bureaucracy, have means to negate the agreement which ended the long-festering rebellion. Nevertheless, at the time of writing, a year after the first locally elected governor of Aceh took office in February 2007, there was reason for optimism. A democratic Indonesia has made giant steps towards accepting a more realistic sense of what the imperial successor state can do.

Notes

[1] The most influential arguments for such factors being decisive in the rise of nationalism were B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso 1991 [1983]); and E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983). The debate has subsequently expanded, and finally included work of more direct relevance to Asia, such as *Asian Forms of the Nation*, ed. S. Tønnesson and H. Antlöv (Richmond: Curzon, 1996).

[2] E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

[3] W. H. McNeill, *Poly-ethnicity and National Unity in World History: The Donald G. Creighton Lectures* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 56.

[4] A major exception was the first, anti-Manchu, stage of Chinese nationalism, while Malay and Khmer nationalist thought also had clear strains of ethnonationalism.

[5] Emperor Shi-zong, 1536, cited in G. Wade, "The Ming Shi-lu (Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty) as a Source for Southeast Asian History: Fourteenth to Seventeenth Centuries", doctoral dissertation, University of Hong Kong, 1994, vol. I, p. 61. I am indebted to Geoffrey Wade for access to this rich source.

[6] Archipelago stories about the Chinese presence in the fifteenth century are reviewed in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. A. Reid (Sydney: Asian Studies Association of Australia with Allen & Unwin, 1996), pp. 23–5. Particularly revealing are the China stories in "Sejarah Melayu or Malay Annals", trans. C. C. Brown, *JMBRAS* 25, 2–3 (1952): 89–91, and *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, ed. K. Ahmad (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1966), pp. 359–72. Vietnamese literature about China is of a completely different order, sharing the concerns of anti-colonial and post-colonial nationalism in the twentieth century to emulate the superpower in order to seek equality with it. See notably O. W. Wolters, "What Else May Ngo Si Lien Mean? A Matter of Distinctions in the Fifteenth Century", in *Sojourners and Settlers,* pp. 94–114; and Insun Yu,

"Le Van Huu and Ngo Si Lien: Their Perception of Vietnamese History", in *Viet Nam: Borderless Histories*, ed. N. Tran and A. Reid (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), pp. 45–71.

[7] The quote is from A. Reid, "Inside-Out: The Colonial Displacement of Sumatra's Population", in *Paper Landscapes: Essays in the Environmental History of Indonesia*, ed. P. Boomgaard *et al.* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1998), pp. 61–89, though the argument was made a little differently in A. Reid, "Kings, Kadis and Charisma in the 17th Century Archipelago", in *The Making of an Islamic Political Discourse in Southeast Asia*, ed. A. Reid (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1993), pp. 90–96; and became the central argument of A. Reid, "Political 'Tradition' in Indonesia: The One and the Many", *Asian Studies Review* 22, 1 (1998): 23–38.

[8] D. Henley, *Jealousy and Justice: The Indigenous Roots of Colonial Rule in Northern Sulawesi* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2002), p. 1: "Indigenous leaders, far from possessing 'a genius for managing without states', possessed a near-Hobbesian awareness of the inevitability of conflict in tribal life and the desirablility of a certain amount of state intervention to alleviate this problem. At the same time, their mutual jealousy and distrust made it easier for them to accept outsiders (whose lack of local blood ties was supposed to help guarantee their impartiality) in the role of arbitrators, judges, and enforcers of the peace than it was to create indigenous institutions with the same functions. In tandem with the role of foreigners as traders, and hence as distributors of valuable and prestigious foreign goods, this logic of jealousy and justice probably goes a long way toward explaining the importance of 'stranger-kings' (Indonesian as well as European) in the history of eastern Indonesia."

[9] Cited in S. Raffles, *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles* (London: J. Duncan, 1835), p. 142.

[10] Cited in C. Pelras, "Hiérarchie et Pouvoir Traditionnel en Pays Wajo", *Archipel* 1 (1971): 173.

[11] In writing "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture", Anderson was explicitly influenced by Geertz's call for a "scientific phenomonology of culture". Reprinted in B. Anderson, ed., *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 18, n. 4.

[12] Ibid., p. 22.

[13] C. Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 11.

[14] O. W. Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, rev. ed. (Singapore: ISEAS, 1999).

[15] A. Milner, *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press for AAS, 1982).

[16] J. Drakard, *A Kingdom of Words: Language and Power in Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1999); L. Nagtegal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger: The Dutch East Indies Company and the Northeast Coast of Java* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996); M. C. Ricklefs, "Unity and Disunity in Javanese Political and Religious Thought of the Eighteenth Century", in *Looking in Odd Mirrors: The Java Sea*, ed. V. J. H. Houben *et al.* (Leiden: Vakgroep Talen en Culturen van Zuidoost-Azië en Oceanië, Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, 1992), pp. 60–75; M. C. Ricklefs, *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java, 1726–1749: History, Literature and Islam in the Court of Pakubuwana II* (Sydney: ASAA with Allen & Unwin and University of Hawai'i Press, 1998); H. Schulte Nordholt, "Leadership and the Limits of Political Control: A Balinese 'response' to Clifford Geertz", *Social Anthropology* 1, 3 (1993); M. Wiener, *Visible and Invisible Realms: Power, Magic and Conquest in Bali* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); L. Andaya, *The World of Maluku: Eastern Indonesia in the Early Modern Period* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993).

[17] J. W. Christie, "States without Cities: Demographic Trends in Early Java", *Indonesia* 52 (Oct. 1991), p. 40.

[18] P.-Y. Manguin, "Etudes Sumatranaises 1: Palembang et Sriwijaya: Anciennes Hypothèses, Recherches Nouvelles", *Bulletin de L'Ecole française d'Etrême-Orient* 76 (1987): 337–402; Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, pp. 32–3 and 119–20.

[19] T. Day, *Fluid Iron: State Formation in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), p. 288.

[20] Ibid., p. 282.

[21] Ibid., p. 288.

[22] Ibid., p. 283.

[23] As he indeed concedes: "I cannot think of a single example of a Southeast Asian state form that is essentially, purely authentic. Foreignness haunts the formation of Southeast Asian states." Ibid., p. 292.

[24] J. M. Somer, *De Korte Verklaring* (Breda: Corona, 1934). The text of the uniform *korte verklaring* is reproduced, in Malay and Dutch, at pp. 362–3.

[25] See, for example, D. Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[26] B. Anderson, "Old State, New Society: Indonesia's New Order in Comparative Historical Perspective", in Anderson, *Language and Power*, pp. 94–120.

[27] A. Reid, "National and Ethnic Identities in a Democratic Age", in *Religion, Ethnicity and Modernity in Southeast Asia,* ed. O. Myung-Seok *et al.* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1998), pp. 11–43.

[28] A. Reid, "Sixteenth Century Turkish Influence in Western Indonesia", *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 10, 3 (1999): 395–414; slightly revised in A. Reid, *An Indonesian Frontier: Acehnese and Other Histories of Sumatra* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), pp. 69–93.

[29] "Atjeh Verslag of C. Snouck Hurgronje, 1893", as translated in A. Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra: Atjeh, the Netherlands and Britain, 1858–1898* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 269.

[30] Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, p. 296.

[31] Governor Goedhart, cited in A. Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 19.

[32] A. J. Piekaar, *Atjeh en de Oorlog met Japan* (Bandung: W. Van Hoeve, 1949), pp. 14–6; Reid, *The Blood of the People*, pp. 28–9.

[33] The Piagam Batee Kureng is reproduced in S. M. Amin, *Sekitar Peristiwa Berdarah di Atjeh* (Jakarta: Soeroengan, 1956), pp. 293–5.

[34] "Redeclaration of Independence of Acheh, Sumatra, 4 December 1976", in Tengku H. M. di Tiro, *The Price of Freedom: The Unfinished Diary of Tengku Hasan di Tiro* (Norsborg: Information Dept., National Liberation Front Acheh Sumatra, 1984), p. 16.

[35] M. Durie, "Framing the Acehnese Text: Language Choice and Discourse Structures in Aceh", *Oceanic Linguistics* 35, 1 (1996): 113.

[36] Ibid.: 116.

[37] di Tiro, *The Price of Freedom*, p. 17.

[38] The text of the Memorandum is given in full in D. Kingsbury, *Peace in Aceh: A Personal Account of the Peace Process* (Jakarta: Equinox, 2006), pp. 199–208, and available on various websites. *Wali Nanggroe* is an Acehnese rendering of Indonesian *Wali Negara,* the term used for the heads of constituent states in the Federal Republic of Indonesia established at Indonesian independence in January 1950, though suppressed within six months by the unitary Indonesian Republic. This office has not been filled in practice in Aceh.

[39] This issue is discussed in M. Keating, *Plurinational Democracy: Stateless Nations in a Post-Sovereignty Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), and B. He, B. Galligan and T. Inoguchi, eds., *Federalism in Asia* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2007).